



The Iranian government systematically excludes individuals from pursuing their education as a form of punishment for exercising their right to freedom of expression—whether this expression takes the form of peaceful political activism or religious affiliation. The deprivation of the right to education is a violation of internationally agreed upon human rights treaties, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to which Iran is a state party. Among those systematically banned from higher education are members of Iran’s Baha’i community. In response, the Baha’i Institute for Higher Education (BIHE) was established to provide an opportunity for Baha’is to obtain their education; sadly, this peaceful institution has also been declared illegal, and many of those involved in providing instruction have been arrested, detained, and charged with criminal offenses. The targeting of the BIHE is part of the pervasive discrimination and persecution faced by Iran’s Baha’i community, the most glaring examples of which are the twenty-year prison sentences imposed on seven leaders of the community, currently imprisoned under substandard conditions in Raja’i Shahr Prison.

The new documentary film “Education Under Fire” movingly presents the decades-long persecution endured by Iran’s Baha’is, featuring interviews with members of the community and human rights activists, as well as rare historical footage. But it is also the story of courage and commitment in the face of human rights violations, as Baha’is who love learning and education make heroic efforts to provide this gift to young members of their faith.

Amnesty International is sponsoring this film and encouraging its members, activists and the public to view the film and to take action to urge the Iranian government to uphold its obligations under international law and to end the persecution of the Baha’is in Iran, to release all prisoners of conscience, and to cease depriving Iranians of the right to education on ideological and religious grounds.

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